

Good afternoon. My name is Andria Thomas and I am a proud resident of Washington, DC. I live in Washington DC for the same reason many of us choose to live someplace. DC is close to my family and my husband's family. It is convenient to work. We have great neighbors, good schools, nearby parks, and wonderful community and culture. But what we don't have are the same American rights enjoyed by Americans living outside of DC. We don't have a vote in Congress. In fact, we just don't lack that vote in the House or those two votes in the Senate that residents of all states are guaranteed; our uniquely unequal status means we don't have full control over our local laws, or our criminal justice system, or even our ability to earn revenue to pay for the parks and schools and roads that our families need. We live in a fundamentally unequal system. All 700,000 of us.

It's very hard to explain this system to my daughters. My 11 year-old, Maggie, learns about American history in school, and the American flag, and the three branches of government in school. But questions like "Who are our Senators?" or "Which star on the flag is for DC?" always prompt the same difficult followup question: Why? How do you tell two little girls born as Americans in a hospital not far from the White House that their rights are not the rights of other Americans? That the US Capitol building they pass on the way to a field trip does not include any representatives who vote for their rights? That they are two of the 100,000 children living in DC who will have to one day choose: to live where they were born and where their families live, or to move away and to an unfamiliar state where they can be equal after all. That's not a choice that any other Americans have to face.

I support DC statehood because my daughters shouldn't have to choose between where they were born and their rights as Americans. They deserve full participation in our government and full representation in our US Congress. Just as my husband and I deserve full representation for the federal taxes we pay annually; in fact, DC residents pay the highest per-capital income taxes in the United States.

Taxation without representation wasn't right during the American Revolution, and now, more than 250 years later, it's not right today for DC. Please support DC statehood for all the DC families and children who deserve the American rights that everybody in Maryland already enjoys. Thank you for your consideration.